



Thursday, May 12, 2011

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IN THIS ISSUE OF THE INFORMER:

NEW OPI PUBLICATION, "ON TRACK"

- On Track – New weekly OPI publication
- Noteworthy – Recent news of the Florida House of Representatives
- OPI Pulse – A listing of background information released by the Florida House's Office of Public Information
- Did You Know? – Helpful hints about the Florida House website

On Track is a weekly document published by the Florida House of Representatives Office of Public Information.

On Track includes status updates on bills that have been presented to the Governor for action.

To view the most recent *On Track* click [here](#) or visit The House [homepage](#).

NOTEWORTHY

Florida House Concludes 2011 Legislative Session

The Florida House of Representatives marked the conclusion of the 2011 Legislative Session passing Senate Bill 2000, the 2011-12 General Appropriations Act (GAA), in addition to a comprehensive list of related implementing and conforming bills on Friday, May 6. The 2011-12 GAA includes a total state budget of \$69,676.6 billion, which is \$841.5 million less than the 2010-11 state budget. The state's 2011-12 General Revenue funding totals \$23,182.7 billion, which is \$863.3 million less than 2010-11 budget. The 2011-12 fiscal year spending plan leaves \$1 billion in General Revenue fund reserves, \$492 million in the budget stabilization fund and \$789 million in the Lawton Chiles Endowment Fund for a total of \$2,281 million in reserves. Some notable measures included in the GAA are:

Department of Economic Opportunity

The Conference Committee Amendment for Senate Bill 2156 creates the Department of Economic Opportunity. The Department is responsible for coordinating the efficient delivery of services and programs related to economic development, workforce development, community planning and development, and affordable housing. The Department will also be responsible for creating a single statewide strategic plan to address the promotion of business formation, expansion, recruitment and retention in order to foster competitive employment opportunities with higher wages for all geographic regions of the state.

SEED Trust Fund

House Bill 7205 creates the State Economic Enhancement and Development or SEED Trust Fund within the Department of Economic Opportunity. Effective July 1, 2012, a total of \$75 million from documentary stamp tax revenues, currently dedicated to affordable housing trust funds, and \$50 million from documentary stamp tax revenues currently dedicated to the State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) will be directed into the SEED Trust Fund. The revenues from the STTF are estimated to grow to \$75 million over the next three years.

Florida Retirement System

Effective July 1, 2011, Senate Bill 2100 provides for a three percent employee contribution for all Florida Retirement System (FRS) members. The legislation also increases the age and years of service requirements, the vesting period, and length of the period used in calculating the Average Final Compensation for new FRS enrollees effective July 1, 2011. The legislation maintains the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) however, employees entering DROP on or after July 1, 2011, will earn interest at a reduced accrual rate of 1.3 percent.



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NOTEWORTHY (cont.)

For employees currently in DROP or entering before July 1, 2011, the interest rate remains at 6.5 percent.

For more information about the 2011-12 state budget, visit:

[2011-12 House Appropriations Documents](#)
[Office of Public Information 2011 Budget Resources](#)

Legislation to Curb Prescription Drug Abuse Unanimously Passes the Florida Legislature

Legislation aimed at curbing prescription drug abuse across the state unanimously passed both the Florida House and Senate on Friday, May 6, 2011. This legislation, among other things, sets strict registration and reporting requirements for practitioners who prescribe controlled substances to treat chronic pain and bans physician dispensing of Schedule II and III controlled substances. The Legislation includes reporting and credentialing requirements and distribution limits for distributors of controlled substances, requires reporting and dispensing requirements for pharmacies and increases the Department of Health's monitoring responsibilities.

To learn more, please visit:

[CS/CS/HB 7095 – Controlled Substances](#)
[House Health & Human Services Committee](#)

Florida Legislature Passes Property Insurance Reform

A bill that aims to reform Florida's property insurance market passed both chambers of the Florida Legislature and is now awaiting signature by Governor Scott.

Titled an Act related to Property and Casualty Insurance, the bill increases surplus requirements for insurance companies to help ensure funds are available to pay claims when homeowners experience losses. It also expands choices for consumers in the purchase of replacement coverage for their dwellings or personal property. In addition, the legislation reforms the sinkhole claims process to reduce frivolous claims, which drive up costs for homeowners, while continuing to make coverage available for those who experience true damage from sinkholes. Finally, the bill updates the 'neutral evaluation process for the resolution of sinkhole claims' in an effort to reduce the time and expense of getting valid claims paid and avoid further litigation.

To learn more, please visit:

[CS/CS/CS/SB 408 – Property and Casualty Insurance](#)
[House Insurance & Banking Subcommittee](#)
[House Economic Affairs Committee](#)

Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act Passes Florida House

On Wednesday, May 4, 2011, the Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act passed the Florida House of Representatives. The Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act shifts existing school nutrition programs from the Department of Education to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Proponents of the measure state this change will result in greater school access to Florida's fresh fruits and vegetables.

To learn more, please visit:

[CS/CS/SB 1312 – Healthy Schools for Healthy Lives Act](#)
[Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services](#)
[House Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee](#)
[House State Affairs Committee](#)



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NOTEWORTHY (cont.)

Florida House Passes Legislation to Cap State Government Revenue

A joint resolution seeking to limit state government revenue passed the Florida House of Representatives on Wednesday, May 4, 2011. The resolution titled 'State Revenue Limitation' is a proposed constitutional amendment that, if approved by voters, would replace the existing state constitutional revenue limitation which is based on personal income growth with a new state revenue limitation based on inflation and changes in population. The resolution will go before Florida voters in November of 2012.

To learn more, please visit:

[CS/SJR 958 – State Revenue Limitation](#)
[State Affairs Committee](#)

Legislation Specific to Higher Education Passes Florida House

A bill titled an Act relating to Postsecondary Education passed the Florida Senate on May 3, 2011, and later passed the House floor on Thursday, May 5, 2011. The bill contains various provisions including, requiring the Higher Education Coordinating Council to make detailed recommendations to the Legislature, the State Board of Education, and the Board of Governors relating to postsecondary education; requiring the Department of Education to utilize student performance data in subsequent coursework in determining appropriate advanced and specialized coursework (example: Advanced Placement) examination scores for the receipt of college credit; removing obsolete references to the College Level Academic Skills Test; establishing the Articulation Coordinating Committee; and removing exemption from the state university summer enrollment requirement for students who have earned nine or more credits through acceleration mechanisms.

To learn more, please visit:

[CS/HB 7151 – Postsecondary Education](#)

OPI Pulse

Throughout the 2011 Legislative Session, the House Office of Public Information published OPI **PULSE** documents on various topics. With the completion of Session, each of these documents will be updated in the coming days and weeks to reflect the conclusion of the proposed legislation.

Be sure to visit the [OPI website](#) to stay up to date on final Pulse materials.

Click [here](#) to see the full listing of OPI **PULSE** documents.

DID YOU KNOW?

The House is on [Facebook](#).

Follow the House on Twitter [@MyFLHouse](#).

New pictures are up on the House [Flickr](#) Photostream.



Visit the [OPI website](#) regularly for new background documents & information.

The House is on YouTube, [MyFloridaHouse](#), and has released the following videos this week:

- [SB 400 – Five Questions with Rep. Darryl Rouson \(D-St. Petersburg\)](#)
- [Schedule for Redistricting Joint Public Meetings](#)
- [CS/HB 4087 Red Light Camera Floor Debate](#)
- [CS/CS/HB 689 Driver Education Floor Debate](#)

Click [here](#) to see the full listing of OPI Videos.